

A report on the birds of Addu Atoll (Maldive Islands)¹

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INTRODUCTION

In December 1963, the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* published a paper by W. W. A. Phillips, entitled, 'The Birds of the Maldive Islands, Indian Ocean'.

The paper opened with a review of the ornithological record to date, and some notes on the ecology and climate of the Maldive Islands. This was followed by a detailed account of the breeding seasons of resident species, and a discussion on migration. The occurrence of casual visitors was tabulated, and in the following systematic list the status of species was indicated where possible.

Addu Atoll was by far the best documented part of the whole archipelago, with records mainly from two sources—namely, Phillips own notes made during 1958-59, and the observations of J. J. Latham covering the period 1960-62.

From 1962 until the closure of the Royal Air Force base at Gan, early in 1976, further records were kept by several observers resident on Addu Atoll. The object of the present paper is to update the atoll list by incorporating this additional information. These notes are therefore best considered as a local supplement to Phillips original paper.

It is hoped that the reader will have access to 'The Birds of the Maldive Islands, Indian

Ocean'—still the only comprehensive account of the ornithology of these islands, that has so far been published.

ADDU ATOLL

Addu Atoll, which is situated just half a degree south of the Equator at a longitude of approximately 73 degrees East, is the most southerly group of the Maldive Archipelago.

A necklace of low lying islands and sandbars, enclose a shallow lagoon of some 30 square miles extent. Five of the islands are permanently inhabited, and here the natural vegetation has been largely replaced by cultivated gardens and coconut groves. There are extensive mud flats between the shoreline and the boundary reef, on the oceanic side of some islands, whilst inland are to be found a number of brackish pools with associated areas of marsh.

Gan—the southernmost island of the atoll—differs from the others in two main respects. Firstly, most of the marshy areas have been successfully drained, and these have been replaced by grassland. Secondly, in some parts that are undisturbed, there has been considerable regeneration of the natural scrubland—a habitat none too common on this densely populated atoll.

The Addu Atoll climate is moist, oceanic, and rather humid. Annual rainfall averages 100 inches, and although there are no well-defined wet or dry seasons, the period October-

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December is generally the wettest time of year, with January-March correspondingly dry. The daily temperature range is small, usually around 24-30°C, and readings above 32°C, or below 21°C are rarely recorded. Apart from early in the year when NE'y winds predominate, and for a few weeks around June-August when SE is a common direction, prevailing winds are between SW and NW, usually in the range 5-15 knots. The atoll lies outside the latitudes that are affected by tropical storms, however localised disturbances of surprising intensity—if of short duration—occur from time to time.

BIRDLIFE

The systematic list that follows deals with 120 or so species, including several that are additions since the publication of Phillips paper. Many of these are also new records for the Maldive Islands.

Breeding species are poorly represented at Addu Atoll, and there are only half a dozen that can be claimed as regular nesting birds. These are the Grey, Little Green, and Pond Heron, White-breasted Waterhen, and two species of tern—the Black-naped and the White Tern. A further four species have nested sporadically, including the Cattle Egret, which as an irregular visitor, has on one occasion stayed behind to nest. The large Pratincole attempted to breed at Gan during 1960—possibly quite accidentally. Two other species, the White-tailed Tropicbird, and the Brown Noddy, have bred on the atoll, but so far there have only been single records for each of these birds.

Seabirds are represented by six species of shearwater, one of which is known to breed elsewhere in the Maldive Islands, two boobies, two frigate species and a tropicbird. One of the frigate species and the tropicbird are probably both widespread residents elsewhere in the archipelago.

Shorebirds account for over 30 species, almost all of them winter visitors or passage birds from the Palaearctic region. Several are quite common including Turnstone, Whimbrel and Curlew Sandpiper, but others such as the Ruff and Terek Sandpiper are less frequently recorded. A number of species are regular non-breeding 'loiterers' throughout the summer period.

Skuas, gulls and terns account for another fifteen species, and although at present most can only be considered as visitors to the atoll, further tern species may eventually prove to be breeding residents.

Of eleven raptors on the list, a few such as the harriers, Honey Buzzard and Kestrel are regular winter visitors, whilst others like the Osprey and Peregrine are much less frequently noted. Near-passerine birds include several swifts and cuckoos, including the Koel that breeds elsewhere throughout the Maldive Islands. Less regular are the Hoopoe and European Bee-eater.

Songbirds only account for sixteen species, all winter visitors or passage migrants. Among the most regular are Swallow, Sandmartin and Isabelline Wheatear. A handful of birds are of Indian rather than Palaearctic origin, and these include Cotton Teal, Plaintive Cuckoo and Paradise Flycatcher.

Migration :

Phillips noted that not only do large numbers of birds (mainly waders), spend the winter months at Addu Atoll, but that others pass onward to Chagos Archipelago, some 250 miles further south. He also noted the regular occurrence of some passerine birds, and evidence of a return migration through Addu Atoll early in the spring.

It would seem likely that the majority of birds reach Addu Atoll by moving southward from island to island, through the Maldivian chain. Since Sri Lanka is also a wintering

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ground for large numbers of Palaearctic species, there may also be a passage of birds from a NE'ly direction, direct to the southern atolls. That birds pass onward to Chagos, there can now be no doubt, however it is not yet possible to say whether others pass through the atoll, en-route to Seychelles, and thence to wintering grounds in Africa.

Some birds such as the Large Pratincole may represent examples of more local movements, just involving the Laccadive, Maldive and Chagos groups.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Where there is nothing significant to add to the information already published by Phillips, a species is briefly dealt with. However, birds not previously recorded from the atoll, and others for which new information is available, are more fully documented.

Order of species follows that used by Phillips, and where there has since been a change in the generic name, the original is placed in brackets. With a few exceptions, sub-species are not dealt with in this paper, and the reader is referred to Phillips for information on specimens collected at Addu Atoll. There have been a number of necessary changes in common names, and an asterisk placed after the specific name indicates that the bird is an addition to the atoll list.

The abbreviated status (to the right of the common name), is derived from examination of all the notes to hand. Further records—especially over a period of time—would doubtless lead to a number of amendments.

Abbreviated Status :

R/r.	Resident	Species regularly breeds on the atoll.
P.	Passage	Species occurs on passage.
W/w.	Winter	Occurs during the northern winter period.
S/s.	Summer	Occurs during the northern summer period.

L/l.	Local	Breeds on other Maldive atolls wanders to Addu.
V.	Vagrant	Considered to be a vagrant to the atoll.
?.	Doubtful	Insufficient data to establish status.
(p).	—	Passage through the atoll is assumed to occur.
(b).	—	Irregular breeding records (successful or not).

Use of a capital letter indicates the principal status of the species, with small letters showing lesser status (where applicable).

- *** Species occurs annually in some numbers.
- ** Species either occurs annually, but only in small numbers, or has been recorded a number of times, during several different years.
- * Species rarely recorded, or records during only a few years.
- Species is of uncertain occurrence—lack of sufficient data.

PROCELLARIIDAE AND HYDROBATIDAE

Oceanites oceanicus *

WILSON'S STORM PETREL S—

An antarctic species that disperses widely outside the breeding season. One record, a sick bird ashore 17 Sept. 1975.

Pelagodroma marina *

WHITE-FACED STORM PETREL P—

A passage species. One record, a dead bird ashore 21 July 1974.

Bulweria bulwerii

BULWER'S PETREL W—

A winter visitor from the North Pacific. One record 22 Aug. 1958.

Puffinus (Procellaria) lherminieri

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER L—

Breeds elsewhere in the Maldive Islands, but not at Addu Atoll. Recorded in small numbers, near the atoll, during 1958.

Puffinus (Procellaria) pacificus

WEDGETAILED SHEARWATER S—

A southern hemisphere species, that disperses widely outside the breeding season. Noted in small numbers, close to the atoll, March-June 1958.

Puffinus (Procellaria) carneipes

PINKFOOTED SHEARWATER P—

Probably mainly a passage species. Noted March-May 1958, and again 16-20 Oct. 1975, when hundreds of birds passed close inshore.

PHAETHONTIDAE

Phaethon lepturus

WHITETAILED TROPIC-BIRD Lr**

Nesting recorded July 1958. Principally a wanderer from nearby atolls, where it is known to breed, being mainly recorded from October till January. Not common, only six records during 1975.

SULIDAE

Sula leucogaster

BROWN BOOBY Ws**

A fairly common visitor to the lagoon, most frequently seen between December and February, occasionally in small parties.

Sula dactylatra

MASKED BOOBY ?—

A single record 28 Nov. 1962. So far there have been no records of another booby, namely, *S. sula*—the Redfooted Booby. This last species may be reasonably assumed to occur around the Maldivian atolls.

FREGATIDAE

Several observers have reported 'Frigates' without noting the species. The Lesser Frigate Bird, has been recorded as a Maldivian breeding

resident, although not at Addu Atoll. In general Frigate Birds are most commonly seen between September and December, occasionally in small parties. During late 1975 sightings were quite frequent. Abbreviated Status is tentative.

Fregata minor

LARGER FRIGATE BIRD SW—

Noted during 1958, and May-June 1961.

Fregata ariel

LESSER FRIGATE BIRD L ***

Highest count, 36 birds on 8 June 1958.

ARDEIDAE

Ardea cinerea

GREY HERON R ***

A common resident with breeding recorded throughout the year, except during March, April and October. There are normally two broods a year, most commonly June-August and December-February. Only one or two chicks are usually raised on each occasion. At Addu Atoll nesting sites are often in the tops of Pandanus trees, with the smaller Pond Heron, sharing the same tree, and nesting at a lower level. The species does not seem to form true nesting colonies, as are to be found in some other parts of its range.

Ardea purpurea

PURPLE HERON W **

An irregular visitor with records between July and January, but most commonly from October till December. Nine pre-1963 records, since when single birds noted, Oct. and Dec. 1967, and Dec. 1970.

Butorides striatus

LITTLE GREEN HERON R1 ***

Least common of the three resident herons, and numbers seen to be decreasing. Breeds

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throughout the year, most commonly during the period October till February. On 17 Sept. 1975, pale birds of the race *didii* were seen—evidence of inter-atoll movements. The local race at Addu Atoll is *albidulus*.

Egretta garzetta

LITTLE EGRET W *

Irregular winter visitor, with only two records. One at the beginning of the century (perhaps suspect), the other during 1957.

Egretta alba

LARGE EGRET W *

Occasional winter visitor. Two records, 20 Dec. 1958 and 31 Jan. 1959.

Bubulcus ibis

CATTLE EGRET W (b) **

Irregular visitor—common some years, unrecorded others. Breeding strongly suspected Sept. 1960, and perhaps also during 1967-68, when up to ten birds were present between October and May. Two to four birds noted October till January 1970-71.

Ardeola grayii

POND HERON R ***

A very common resident, breeding throughout the year, but mainly during the period September till April. A survey carried out covering the period June-December 1975, at Gan, showed a steady 15% of the birds to be in full breeding plumage. A normal brood size seems to be 3-4 chicks.

Ixobrychus sinensis

LITTLE YELLOW BITTERN W *

Irregular winter visitor, with only two records, both during 1958.

Ixobrychus cinnamomeus

CHESTNUT BITTERN SW*

Uncommon visitor. Four records, all during 1961.

Dupetor flavicollis

BLACK BITTERN SW *

Uncommon visitor. Three birds June 1958, one bird 10 March 1961.

Botaurus stellaris

COMMON BITTERN W *

Uncommon visitor. Three records, all during period Oct.-Dec. 1961.

PLATALEIDAE

Plegadis falcinellus

GLOSSY IBIS W *

A rare visitor. Two records, January 1959 and October 1961.

ANATIDAE

Anas crecca *

COMMON TEAL W *

Irregular visitor. Noted among a mixed flock of wildfowl, during October 1965.

Anas querquedula

GARGANEY W **

Winter visitor, probably quite regular. Oct.-Jan. 1958-59, flocks up to 25, Sep.-Oct. 1964 up to 18. Others noted October 1965, and October 1975.

Anas acuta

PINTAIL W *

Irregular visitor. Several noted October-December 1958.

Anas (Spatula) clypeata

SHOVELLER W *

Irregular visitor. Only recorded November-January 1958-59, in small parties.

Aythya nyroca

FERRUGINOUS DUCK V—

Probably a vagrant. A single record of a female 5 Nov. 1958.

Nettapus coromandelianus

COTTON TEAL

W *

FALCONIDAE

Irregular winter visitor. Noted Dec. 1958, and several during October 1965.

Falco peregrinus

PEREGRINE FALCON

W **

An irregular visitor recorded between September and December. Three pre-1963 sightings, since then, one on 27th Sept. 1970, and two exhausted birds seen in December 1972.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Buteo sp.

BUZZARDS

W **

Buteo species have been recorded from October till January. Usually solitary, but two birds present during December 1975. Other records during 1959, 1967 and 1970.

Falco vespertinus

REDFOOTED FALCON

W **

A regular winter visitor recorded between November and March. Rather scarce some years, but six birds were present during the period Nov.-Jan. 1964-65.

Pernis apivorus

HONEY BUZZARD

W **

Regular winter visitor, most common from November till January, although some birds linger well into the summer. Usually solitary, although a party of five were recorded flying southwards from Gan, on 9 January 1971.

Falco subbuteo *

HOBBY

W **

No pre-1963 reports, but since recorded regularly between November and May. Recognised from the previous species by the following features. Male has boldly streaked underparts, distinct white throat and cheeks, with a clear moustachial stripe. Females are also well marked below, and both sexes have yellow legs.

Circus aeruginosus

MARSH HARRIER

W **

Irregular winter visitor, mainly recorded from October till February. Noted during 1961, 1964, 1967-68, and 1970—occasionally in pairs.

Falco naumanni

LESSER KESTREL

W **

A regular winter visitor between October and February. Usually 1-3 birds together, but five were seen on 12 Jan. 1975.

Circus macrourus and C. pygargus

MONTAGU'S/PALLID HARRIER

W **

Regular winter visitors from October till April. Since birds seen are in immature plumage, these species cannot be safely separated. That both occur has been established by Phillips, who collected specimens.

Falco tinnunculus

KESTREL

W **

A regular winter visitor from October till May. Usually solitary, but four together at times during the period 1964-65 (perhaps a case of misidentification with the previous species).

Pandion haliaetus

OSPREY

WS *

An irregular visitor. Two records, July 1960 and December 1975.

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RALLIDAE

Amaurornis phoenicurus

WHITE-BREADED WATERHEN

R ***

A common resident. Breeds throughout the year, but especially during the period May-January. The nesting season seems to be influenced by rainfall, since the driest months are those with the least breeding activity. Brood size probably 4-6 chicks. Skulking and rather crepuscular in habits.

Gallicrex cinerea

WATERCOCK

L *

Does not breed at Addu Atoll, so the single record during 1957 must have been a wanderer from another atoll, where breeding has been recorded.

CHARADRIIDAE

Chettusia gregaria *

SOCIABLE PLOVER

? —

Status uncertain. A single record of one bird 24-25 Sept. 1975. Phillips treated reports of this species in the Maldivian islands with caution, suggesting that they might have been misidentified. The authenticity of this single Addu Atoll record is however beyond doubt.

Charadrius hiaticula

RINGED PLOVER

W (p) **

Regular winter visitor in small numbers, recorded mainly between October and March.

Charadrius dubius

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

W (p) **

Irregular winter visitor, not seen every year. Records between November and February, solitary or in parties of 2-3 birds.

Charadrius alexandrinus

KENTISH PLOVER

W (p) **

Irregular winter visitor, occasionally in small parties. Recorded between October and February.

Charadrius mongolus

LESSER SAND PLOVER

WP ***

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant in moderate numbers. Records between August and April, with counts of upto 50 birds.

Charadrius leschenaultii

LARGE SAND PLOVER

Ws (p) **

A regular winter visitor in rather small numbers, with a few records of summer non-breeders. Recorded mainly between August and April, parties to 15.

Charadrius asiaticus

CASPIAN PLOVER

W *

One record of two birds November 1958. Despite no further reports, the bird is probably better considered as a rare winter visitor, than as a vagrant.

Pluvialis squatarola

GREY PLOVER

Ws (p) ***

A regular winter visitor in moderate numbers, a few summer non-breeders. Mainly recorded from August till April. Highest counts, 30 birds.

Pluvialis dominica

ASIATIC GOLDEN PLOVER

W (p) ***

A regular visitor in large numbers. Records August till May, with flocks of around 50 birds regular October-March. 115 birds Dec. 1975.

Arenaria interpres

TURNSTONE

WPs ***

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor, with a few birds remaining all summer.

Maximum flocks of 200-500 during the passage months of October, November and February.

Limosa lapponica

BARTAILED GODWIT

W **

An irregular winter visitor in small numbers, recorded from June till January. Usually solitary, but a party of four 12 Nov. 1970. Reports of the rather similar *L. limosa*. The Blacktailed Godwit probably refer to this species.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Capella sp.

SNIPE

W **

Three species of snipe have been recorded, and these are best dealt with collectively. They are regular winter visitors recorded from September till April, in small but variable numbers. In many instances observers have not specified actual species, but the following records were all concerned with a particular bird :—

C. stenura

PINTAIL SNIPE

Several 1958-59, also two birds 26 Sept. 1975.

C. megala

SWINHOE'S SNIPE

A single record—December 1958.

C. gallinago

COMMON SNIPE

Several 1958-59, and a few Oct.-Nov. 1975. Most records of 'snipe' probably refer to this species.

Numenius arquata

CURLEW

Ws (p) **

A scarce but regular winter visitor, mainly recorded between October and April. Irregular records of summer non-breeders. Sometimes to be found among flocks of Whimbrel.

Numenius phaeopus

WHIMBREL

Ws (p) ***

A regular winter visitor in large numbers, with non-breeders all summer. Mainly recorded between August and March, in flocks of up to 30-40—occasionally 60.

Tringa glareola

WOOD SANDPIPER

W **

A fairly regular winter visitor in small numbers, recorded from August till February. Usually solitary, but a party of six were seen 18 Feb. 1961.

Tringa hypoleucos

COMMON SANDPIPER

W ***

A regular winter visitor in moderate numbers, recorded from August till April. Solitary in habit, but as many as 15 have been seen in a single day at Gan (23 Oct. 1975).

Tringa stagnatilis *

MARSH SANDPIPER

W **

An irregular winter visitor in small numbers, only recorded during September and October. Usually solitary, but a party of seven on 25 Sept. 1975.

Tringa totanus

REDSHANK

W *

An irregular winter visitor in surprisingly small numbers, recorded between September and March. Several pre-1963 reports, otherwise one on 3 Oct. 1970, and two on 22 Sept. 1975.

Tringa nebularia

GREENSHANK

Ws (p) ***

A regular winter visitor in moderate numbers, mainly recorded from October till March. Non-breeders remain throughout the summer. Often seen in small parties of up to a dozen birds.

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Xenus cinereus

TEREK SANDPIPER

W *

September till April, in flocks of up to 100.
Maximum count 500 birds on 9 Nov. 1967.

An irregular winter visitor. Records between September and December, usually of single birds. Noted during 1958, 1968 (pair) and 1975.

Calidris sp.

STINTS

W (p) **

Three species have been recorded, although many observers do not attempt to separate them. Best treated collectively, when they can be referred to as regular winter visitors in rather small numbers, mainly recorded from October till February. Often solitary, but a party of 15 were seen on 1 Oct. 1970. Selected records include :—

C. minutus

LITTLE STINT

Several pre-1963, also noted 1967, 1970 and 1975.

C. temminckii

TEMMINCK'S STINT

Some 1958 (one during May), one bird Oct. 1970.

C. subminutus

LONGTOED STINT

Several pre-1963 records. Single birds October and November 1975.

Calidris alpina

DUNLIN

W (p) *

An irregular winter visitor in small numbers. Several Nov.-Feb. 1958-59, others noted Oct.-Dec. 1972.

Calidris testaceus

CURLEW SANDPIPER

WPs ***

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant in large numbers, with some non-breeders throughout the summer. Most common from

Calidris alba

SANDERLING

W (p) **

An irregular winter visitor in small numbers. Records between October and March are usually of single birds, but four noted 14 Oct. 1975.

Philomachus pugnax

RUFF

W *

An irregular winter visitor recorded during October and November. Two during 1958, and a single bird 23 November 1975.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE, GLAREOLIDAE,
DROMADIDAE

Himantopus himantopus

BLACKWINGED STILT

V—

Probably a vagrant. Two records, 5 Nov. 1961 and 1-3 Oct. 1970.

Glareola pratincola

LARGE (COLLARED) PRATINCOLE

L (b) ***

Mainly a winter visitor during the period October till January. Pre-1963 records include flocks of over 25 birds, but since then only noted in small parties of up to five birds. There is a record of attempted nesting at Addu Atoll during 1961, but the status of the species as a regular breeding bird of the Maldivé Islands, has yet to be confirmed.

Dromas ardeola

CRAB PLOVER

?—

Status uncertain. The only records are of two birds on 8 June 1958, and a party of five (including one juvenile) at Gan 12-26 October 1975. May be resident elsewhere in the Maldivé Islands, but this cannot yet be confirmed.

STERCORARIIDAE

Stercorarius skua

GREAT SKUA ? —

A single record during 1961—presumably of the Antarctic race.

LARIDAE

Larus ridibundus

BLACKHEADED GULL V —

Probably a vagrant. One record December 1961. So far there have been no reports of *L. brunnicephalus*, the Brown-headed Gull, a bird common around Sri Lanka during the winter months.

Larus fuscus/argentatus *

LESSER BLACKBACK/HERRING GULL ? —

A single immature *fuscus* or *argentatus* bird was seen at Gan 29 Sept. 1970.

Chlidonias leucoptera

WHITewingED BLACK TERN W **

A fairly regular winter visitor in small numbers, recorded from November till February. Usually 2 or 3 together, but a flock of six were seen near the atoll on 6 Feb. 1975.

Gelochelidon nilotica

GULLBILLED TERN W **

A winter visitor in small numbers, recorded from September till March. All reports are of single birds.

Hydroprogne tschegrava (caspia)

CASPIAN TERN W *

An irregular winter visitor. The only records are of nine birds during 1961, and two on 5 January 1965.

Sterna hirundo

COMMON TERN W **

An irregular winter visitor, recorded from October till February. Two 1959 records (race

tibetana), other records during 1967, and 26 Oct. 1975. The species has probably been overlooked, since in winter dress it bears a strong resemblance to the locally common Blacknaped Tern.

Sterna sumatrana

BLACKNAPED TERN R ***

A common resident that nests on sandbars and islets. Breeding at Addu Atoll has been noted during June and July. Large numbers can often be seen resting on sandbanks, or at the edge of the reef.

Sterna fuscata

SOOTY TERN L ***

A common visitor—no confirmed breeding records for the atoll, but considered to be a widespread resident elsewhere in the Maldivé Islands.

Sterna anaethetus

BRIDLED TERN ? —

Status uncertain, but may breed elsewhere in the Maldivé Islands. One record of a single bird 15 June 1959.

Sterna albifrons

LITTLE/SAUNDER'S TERN Lw ***

Best treated as two separate species :—

S. a. albifrons

A rare winter visitor, one record 15 November 1958.

S. a. saundersi

Believed to breed in some numbers elsewhere in the Maldivé Islands, but no Addu Atoll records as yet. Recognised by its dark primaries, large numbers have been recorded throughout the year.

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Sterna (Thalasseus) bergii

LARGE CRESTED TERN

L *

An uncommon visitor, no breeding records. Assumed to be a resident elsewhere in the Maldive Islands. Pre-1963 records, also seen during 1975, when three birds on 26 Oct., and another two on 10 Nov.

1963 reports, but since when, 6 birds on 29 Sept. 1970, and two immatures present 28 Sept-24 Oct. 1975.

CUCULIDAE

Cuculus canorus

COMMON CUCKOO

W **

A regular winter visitor, recorded from September till January. One or two birds are recorded almost annually.

Sterna (Thalasseus) bengalensis

LESSER CRESTED TERN

L ***

Much commoner than the previous species, but the same breeding remarks apply. Records between October and May, noted by most observers. 32 were counted on 7 Feb. 1975, and large numbers seen 7 Oct. and 11 Dec. of the same year.

Cacomantis merulinus

INDIAN PLAINTIVE CUCKOO

W *

An irregular visitor with two records only. January 1959 and November 1961.

Anous stolidus

BROWN (COMMON) NODDY

Lr ***

A single Addu Atoll breeding record April 1959. Birds seen are assumed to be mainly visitors from elsewhere in the Maldive Islands. Quite common with 40 on 12 Sept. 1968, and large numbers at roost late 1975.

Penthoceryx sonneratii *

BAY BANDED CUCKOO

? —

A bird fitting the description of this species, was seen and photographed one autumn during the late 1960's. Little detail available, so perhaps the record is best treated with caution.

Gygis alba

WHITE TERN

R ***

Very common throughout the atoll. Breeds all year, but especially during the periods Jan.-Feb. and May-June. Nests mainly in Coconut Palms, often around villages, where the birds are quite undisturbed by the local population. Very aggressive towards other species, especially larger raptors. The absence of the House Crow, *Corvus splendens*, on the atoll may be due to the presence of White Terns. As yet the species is confined to Addu Atoll, and does not breed elsewhere in the Maldive Islands.

Eudynamys scolopacea

KOEL

L **

A regular non-breeding visitor, most commonly recorded between November and January. The species breeds throughout the Maldive Islands, except for Addu Atoll, where it is excluded by the absence of its host, the House Crow.

STRIGIDAE

Asio flammeus

SHORT EARED OWL

? —

A single old record made around 1900. No further reports.

COLUMBIDAE

Streptopelia orientalis *

RUFIOUS TURTLE DOVE

W *

An irregular winter visitor, so far only recorded during September and October. No pre-

APODIDAE

Collocalia brevirostris

EDIBLE-NEST SWIFT

W *

An irregular visitor, two pre-1963 records, and one bird on 13 Nov. 1970.

Apus affinis

WHITE RUMPED HOUSE SWIFT

Ws **

An irregular visitor, with half a dozen records, mainly of solitary birds, during the winter months. However, 7 were noted 16 Dec. 1961, and two birds during May 1975.

Apus apus

COMMON SWIFT

W (p) **

A regular winter visitor, with records between September and November. Often solitary, but up to five birds together during September 1975.

Apus pallidus*

PALLID SWIFT

W *

An uncommon winter visitor, twice recorded, 3 Oct. 1970, and 20 Sept. 1975. The latter bird was examined in the hand. It was of distinctly pale appearance, with no 'sooty' aspect to the plumage. The forehead was almost white in colour.

Hirundapus caudacutus *

NEEDLE-TAILED SWIFT

? —

Uncertain status. One record 22 October 1970.

MEROPIDAE

Merops apiaster

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER

? —

Uncertain status. One record, a party of three January-March 1959.

CORACIIDAE

Coracias benghalensis *

INDIAN ROLLER

W *

An irregular winter visitor. Two records, 16-23 Nov. 1964 and 11 Nov. 1970.

UPUPIDAE

Upupa epops *

HOOPOE

? —

Status uncertain. One bird at Gan, for several days during the autumn of 1972.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Hirundo rustica

SWALLOW

WP ***

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Records between 14 September and 17 January. Usually in small parties of up to 6 birds, but a flock of 20+ has been recorded.

Delichon urbica

HOUSE MARTIN

W (p) **

An irregular winter visitor, with records from 3 October till late December. Usually solitary (sometimes among Swallows), but a party of four were recorded in Dec. 1972.

Riparia riparia

SAND MARTIN

WP **

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant, with records between 25 September and 11 November, except for a single bird on 5 May 1968. Usually in ones and twos, but a party of ten were seen during 1970.

Riparia paludicola *

PLAIN SAND MARTIN

? —

Status uncertain. A single record 30 November 1967.

TURDIDAE

Oenanthe oenanthe *

COMMON WHEATEAR

? —

Status uncertain. A single record 1-3 October 1970.

BIRDS OF ADDU ATOLL

Oenanthe isabellina

ISABELLINE WHEATEAR

W (p) **

A fairly regular visitor in small numbers. Eight sightings, between 19 October and 8 December. All singles except for a pair on 19 Oct. 1975.

Oenanthe pleschanka (leucomela)

PIED WHEATEAR

W (p) **

Irregular winter visitor in small numbers. Six sightings, between 24 October and 16 December—all singles.

Saxicoloides fulvicata *

INDIAN ROBIN

? —

Status uncertain. A single female/immature 22 November 1967.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Tchitrea paradisi

PARADISE FLYCATCHER

? —

Status uncertain. Two records, 27 October 1961 and 12 November 1967.

MOTACILLIDAE

Motacilla cinerea

GREY WAGTAIL

W *

A rare winter visitor. Two records, 17 Dec. 1958 and 14 Nov. 1968.

Motacilla flava

YELLOW WAGTAIL

W (p) **

A winter visitor in small numbers. About a dozen records, during the period September till November. Usually solitary, but five on 27 Oct. 1961.

Anthus cervinus

REDTHROATED PIPIT

W (p) *

An irregular winter visitor with records from September till December. Several pre-1963

reports, otherwise just a single bird 7-9 Nov. 1975.

LANIIDAE

Lanius collurio (cristatus)

BROWN SHRIKE

W**

A winter visitor in small numbers, with some half a dozen reports—all of single birds between 3 November and 12 January. Birds seen during 1975 were of the race *phoenicuroides*, the Rufous Shrike.

SYLVIIDAE

Phylloscopus sp. *

WARBLERS

? —

A single bird seen 10 October 1974. Considered by the observer to be *P. trochilis*, the Willow Warbler.

STURNIDAE

Sturnus vulgaris *

COMMON STARLING

V —

A single bird was seen among a flock of Turnstones on 22 October 1975. Close examination (from about 20 feet), left no doubt as to identity. Must be considered as a vagrant—perhaps shipborne?

ORIOLIDAE

Oriolus oriolus *

GOLDEN ORIOLE

W (p) *

Probably an irregular winter visitor or passage migrant. Two records, both females, 10 October 1970 and 22 October 1975.

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The following people provided the personal notes that were used in this paper. For pre-1963 contributors see Phillips original paper.

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For a more complete guide to relevant literature, the reader is referred back to Phillips original paper on the Maldive Islands.

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